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NEWS RELEASE

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Colorful Playground Just a Hop, Skip and a Jump Away

Carteret County Parks and Recreation Department awarded grant to update outdoor spaces and increase healthy activity

Carteret Co. N.C. – Carteret County Parks and Recreation Department recently received a grant to transform a public area located at Fort Benjamin Park in Newport into an imaginative space for families to play and be active outdoors. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) and the North Carolina Recreation and Park Association (NCRPA) are supporting healthier communities by installing PlayPrints across the state.

PlayPrints are ground markings, or colorful shapes and games that are painted on existing pavement. The bright colors and interactive designs are meant to encourage visitors to take part in more physical activity. Community agencies across North Carolina were invited to apply.

“Receiving a PlayPrints grant for Fort Benjamin Park is a helpful step toward our goal of increasing opportunities for an active and healthy lifestyle in a fun environment”, said Tina Purifoy, Director of Carteret County Parks and Recreation Department. “Park visitors will enjoy this creative new way to utilize our public space and participate in outdoor physical activity.”

Fort Benjamin is the newest facility in the County park system, opening in 2011 as a joint project between the County and Carteret County School System. Over the past few years new amenities have been added and creative new programs continue to lure residents from all over the county to enjoy all that Fort Benjamin has to offer. Adding PlayPrints to the existing concrete area under the band shell will enhance the area and provide another feature for visitors of all ages to use in a variety of physical activities.

“We want to promote healthy habits at an early age and make it fun for North Carolinians to get outside and get active with their families,” said Kathy Higgins, vice president of corporate affairs at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. “PlayPrints are a simple way to take existing outdoor spaces in our communities and transform them into a center for healthy activity and imaginative play.”

Over the next two years, PlayPrints will be popping up at open play spaces as part of BCBSNC's Get Outside North Carolina! (GO NC!) program. GO NC! builds healthy and active lifestyles through the advancement of greenway systems, increased access to public bicycles and the overall promotion of outdoor physical activity.

"Providing fun and creative avenues to engage our communities by adding PlayPrints to our parks and greenways is an exciting way to encourage citizens of all ages to have a little fun while increasing physical activity," said Michelle Wells, executive director at NCRPA.

For a complete list of PlayPrints recipients and to follow progress as PlayPrints are installed throughout the state visit www.NCRPA.net/PlayPrints or follow @NCRPA @BCBSNC or #PlayPrints on Twitter and Facebook.

About Carteret County Parks and Recreation Department:

Carteret County Parks and Recreation is dedicated to providing a wide range of programs and recreational opportunities that serve all residents and visitors. Recreation is an essential community component that contributes to the health, welfare, and quality of life within the county. As the population of Carteret County continues to grow, it is essential to recognize the critical value and importance of creating, maintaining, and enhancing recreation opportunities within the county. Additional information on programs and facilities can be found at <http://ccpr.recdesk.com>.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina improves the health and well-being of our customers and communities by providing innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.91 million members, including approximately 1 million served on behalf of other Blue Plans. Since 1933, we have worked to make North Carolina a better place to live through our support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. We have been recognized as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies by Ethisphere Institute every year since 2012. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Visit BCBSNC online at bcbsnc.com. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

About the North Carolina Recreation & Park Association:

Founded in 1944, the North Carolina Recreation & Park Association (NCRPA) is the premier nonprofit education and advocacy organization, dedicated to the advancement of the park, recreation and leisure professions in our state. NCRPA empowers park and recreation professionals and citizen board members through educational opportunities that enhance their ability to change lives and impact communities on a daily basis for the citizens of North Carolina. For an overview of the programs and services offered by the organization, visit www.ncrpa.net.

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